

LAS VEGAS GAZETTE.

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CARDS

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VIEWES AND SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING INDIAN AFFAIRS.

[Continued from last week.]

This is a great measure, would be introducing the good and effective "Pueblo system" among them, which has been the means of reducing to their present state the many semi-civilized Indians now to be found in New Mexico, Arizona, etc. Of course the school master, and the mechanic, should be introduced hand in hand among them at once, in order that the good work intended should be fairly commenced and permanently established. To do this (effectively), you should spare no pains nor means in training and educating their children; here is where the only and all the hope is concentrated. All you can do with the old Indian is to make him behave, and to allow him to pass the remainder of his days as quietly and as peaceably as possible.

You should make up your mind from the commencement to feed and to take care of the Indians as fast as you place them on the reservations; and until you make them self-supporting. Experience has fully demonstrated, that it is a great deal cheaper to feed an Indian than it is to fight him. The Florida Indian war, and the Navajo and Apache Indian troubles in New Mexico, are instances. The expense which there alone have cost the government will think evidence enough to support the statement.

When we take into consideration the almost incredible and rapid decrease of the entire Indian race, which is a fact beyond all speculation, their present wandering, miserable, and destitute condition—without even a place that they can call their own, even if they have the greatest desire to live quietly, for it must be borne in mind, that even among the worst of them, there are many who are anxious to be at peace with the whites, and lead a tranquil life, and when we consider the rapid decrease or absolute disappearance of all sorts of game from their old hunting grounds, the scarcity of which is notorious, and more sensibly felt by the Indians, and which has been brought about in great measure, by the constant increasing settlement of those localities by the whites, and the many highways that have been established throughout the western frontier, besides the great desire of the nation, that the Indian shall be prevented from molesting and interfering with the progressive spirit of the age, which in reality is the main source of our present Indian troubles. When we consider all this facts, they call loudly for your interposition in behalf of the Indian race. And it becomes your imperative duty to provide them with a comfortable home for the balance of their days, which are destined not to be long in the land.

Many, we regret say are of the opinion, and freely express it, that extermination is the only remedy; but this is all bombast; it will hardly do to talk about, too much of which has already been done. This should not even be listened to by any sensible man. We do not hesitate in saying, that it cannot

be done. It is a false notion, it is a humbug even to think of it.

But even supposing for a moment that it could be done, would the masses of your own people allow you to do it? We think not. Would you yourselves, allow the odium of the entire civilized world to come down on you, and upon the entire population, and good name of your country. Humanity, and the credit and pride of your great and glorious nation, all say you shall not commit such atrocity. It would be revolting, and you should not even think of attempting, or authorizing any thing of the kind. Hence our suggestions, and the necessity of your action in the premises.

"In time of peace prepare for war." This should be strictly observed in regard to the management of our Indians. But, like many other important Indian matters, it seems to be entirely neglected. Hence it follows, that at the commencement of an Indian outbreak, we are never ready, and consequently, it is all hurry, bustle and confusion. And in most cases the Indians get the best of our people, and manage to keep the field, until they actually make the whites come to their senses! This may sound strange, but it is nevertheless the true case.

You must commence an entirely new policy with the wild Indians. You ought certainly to be convinced by this time, that a change is absolutely necessary. You cannot but keep time with the circumstances by which you are daily becoming surrounded. An Indian policy that was admirably effective forty years ago, is utterly inefficient to-day. The very localities which twenty years ago were the actual homes and hunting grounds of the Indians are now covered with villages and cities of the whites. Your population is advancing westward with the velocity of the locomotive engine, and is compelling the Indians to retreat at the same rate of speed. And they are now, as it were, on board of a trail train tossed about before a tremendous storm. You are the pilot, and it is your duty to endeavor to save them.

No more treaties should be made with wild Indians. The government should take the entire charge of them, and act with them as a father with his children, comparatively speaking, the Indians are but children and it is as ridiculous to make treaties with them as it is to make them with so many school boys. You must be their sole guardian, instead of their common equal, and treat them accordingly.

Ten minutes after an Indian makes his mark upon the paper containing a treaty which he has made with you, he is ready to break it, and it cannot be otherwise; the whole thing is "Greek" to him. What force or effect can this mere declaration have upon a wild, and uncultivated mind? upon a savage!

And yet, you go into these treaties with the same formality and solemnity as if you were entering into one with one of the most enlightened nations of the globe. And what is more astonishing to us, is not that the Indians should break a treaty, but that a civilized and educated nation like ours, should expect the Indians to keep it sacred, and this too, whilst they are lundering at large, without as it were, "a shepherd or a fold."

The every chief who sign a treaty know but little about it, and as to the entire tribe, in most cases, they know less about the matter. Besides many of the chiefs are self constituted, and their power and influence over their people are not near as great as many are led to believe. The power of most of the Indian chiefs, of the present day, is nominal, rather than otherwise. This is certainly the case with the wild Indians of New Mexico and Arizona.

In connection with this, it should be borne in mind that many of the Indian interpreters are not able to convey correctly to the minds of the Indians every thing contained in a treaty, no matter how well disposed they may be to do so; the want of proper and adequate words and sentences will prevent them from doing so. Besides, by the time the interpretation reaches the Indians it has lost much of its force and effect, particularly if it has to go through more than one interpreter.

Nor is there any doubt, that some of the interpreters, in many instances, will introduce their own notions and opinions in the interpretation rather than to express those of the Indians, and vice versa. This is more apt to be the case where the interpreters reside or are connected with the tribe of course there may be some honest exceptions. These and many other drawbacks respecting "treaty making" should be duly considered in favor of our views.

We will also venture to say, that the only clause of treaty, if any, properly understood by the Indians in any treaty you make with them, is that containing the amount of presents, etc, which they are to receive. The prevailing idea with most wild Indians in making a treaty is, that you obligate your selves to pay them, a certain amount for them to keep the peace. Thus it is, that many of the Indians receive their presents more as a matter of course than as a bounty from the Government. And the moment you fail to comply with this clause, or in making the supposed payment, which is too often the case, the Indians feel as though you have deceived them, which in effect you do in very such failure. And the inevitable result is, discontent, and perhaps a resort to depredations with a war to crown the performance.

Another most important subject demanding the serious consideration of Congress is, the proper selection of men to fill the various superintendencies and Indian Agencies. Politics should no longer be the main qualification, and guaranty to fill such places, as it has been, and as is now the case. This has been a great oversight, or rather a great error. So much so has this been the case, that it is now believed by the majority of the people that almost anybody will answer for the purpose. But this is a sad mistake.

And were the people now so clamorous and ready to attribute our Indian troubles to the dishonesty and all doings of Indian Agents, to attribute them in part, at least, to the inexperience and incapacity of some of the Agents, and to the want of a proper knowledge of the Indian character, etc,

then these people would, in our opinion, come a great deal nearer to the facts. And at the same time, they would be doing such Agents justice, as it were, instead of doing injustice to all, as they are now virtually doing.

Perhaps no branch of the public service requires a more careful selection of men than this every-one. It requires a combination of qualifications and experience, without which, a man can never become a good and efficient Indian Agent. The Indian Agent cannot learn his duty fully and properly by books neither can he learn much by following the notions and advice of other people on the subject. He must acquire all the necessary information to be useful by actual observation and personal experience.

He must find out and know all about the creature he has to deal with, before he can be able to manage him with any degree of success. To suppose a man can gain good will and confidence of an Indian and know all about him upon a short acquaintance is nonsense; it does not even look reasonable. The Indian, for the want of proper training and education, is ignorant in many respects, but you must not take him for a fool, if you do, you are very apt to be deceived. He is sngacious, incredulous, superstitious, and haughty, and malicious, and he is easily displeased and provoked, with many other traits of character peculiar to him. All of which, require time, patience, labor, and good management to learn, and to overcome properly. Yet all these facts, seem to be entirely disregarded in the selection of men to fill the important places of Indian Agents. And no doubt, this has had much to do in bringing about Indian troubles. But whose fault is it? Politics. You have allowed this to overrule every other consideration.

Indian Agents should be selected as near as possible, for their capacity, honesty, and good disposition, independent of all politics and personal considerations. They should be men knowing as much as possible about the Indian, his habits, disposition, and other traits of his character. They should possess some knowledge, at least of the country inhabited by the Indians to be placed under their charge, or the resources of the same; and of the Indians, true condition and wants.

They should be men possessing more practical common sense than "book learning," although the latter will not hurt them. Common sense, however, should have the preference. This is absolutely necessary to enable them to know how to discriminate between the well disposed Indian and the really one, and to know how to treat them according to his merits, and when to recommend, that he shall be punished, or otherwise.

They should also be men who would willing to take the position, more with a view of doing good, than for the purpose of speculation. And who would be willing to reside among the Indians as much as possible, and be able to bear with all the inconveniences and annoyances incident to the task. And in fact, they should be men in every respect fit for the position. No others should be employed.

If such men as have been described cannot be found in the east, you can certainly find them in the west. Men who have been constantly among the Indians for the last twenty or thirty years, and who know all about them. And who are also able and willing to undergo hardships and troubles whenever necessary, which is the case. These, we should say, are the class of the men that should be appointed as Indian Agents.

We can see no good reason why the same rule, or a similar one, should not be observed by the government, in the selection of Superintendents and Indian Agents, as is observed in the selection of Army Officers; when in fact the responsibility, life and property is equally as great if not greater, in most cases with the former, than with the latter. A regular system in the appointment and dismissal of officers for the Indian service is absolutely needed. This would enable you to secure the services of good and competent men. And at the same time would be the means of doing away with the multitude of office seekers constantly running after, and harassing members of Congress, and everybody else in authority, until they think that they are all right, and that their fortunes are made. This of itself is a sure evidence that the object of such men is more with a view of making all they can out of the office than for the purpose of promoting the interest of the government or that of the Indians. This is the prevailing opinion on the subject, and to say the least of it, it looks bad. And it has given rise to many of the abuses now heaped upon officers of this service.

The present system, (if system it can be called,) of appointing, and removing Indian Agents, is neither wise nor just. In the first place, you often make Agents out of men entirely incompetent; and secondly you remove them with an even investigation. We can safely say, that so far as New Mexico is concerned, the constant changes of superintendents and Indian Agents have become to be a perfect farce; so much so, that in reality, the name of the "Indian Department" alone exists.

Not one session of Congress passes by that we do not receive a "new batch of recruits." This can have no other effect than to make the very men in office lose confidence in themselves and become discouraged; and we may even say reckless, not knowing what moment they are going to be "turned out of office, whether they perform their duties faithfully and properly or not."

It has become a tedious, that you do not even allow men time enough to become properly acquainted with their duties, nor with the Indians under their charge, before you turn them out of office, upon the least pretext and in many cases even without any. In some instances the agents know nothing about their removal until their successors present themselves to take charge of the office. And why all this? merely to satisfy some political hanger on. This is too bad, and it is to be regretted that we have to make these statements, but if we say anything at all on the subject, these facts must be told.

The causes complained of cannot but

prove detrimental to the interest of the service, take any view of it you please. Even the Indians lose confidence in their agents, and not without good cause; to-day they hear one statement and receive one kind of treatment, and to-morrow, comparatively speaking, they hear a different statement and receive a different treatment. And why? because every new agent is apt to have his own notions and views respecting Indians and of the manner in which Indian Affairs should be conducted, and the less these agents know about these matters, the more apt is this to be the case, no matter how well disposed they may be, there is still a difference; this must be obvious.

After the selection and appointment of the right kind of men, as before recommended, are made, they should be given to understand that the holding of their office depended entirely upon a faithful and prompt discharge of their duties, and so long as any of them acted accordingly, the proper authorities should stand by them, and they should allow no political malice, or any trifling cause, to interfere with them, so far as their offices were concerned.

They should be paid competent salaries, such as would support them well, and would justify them in devoting their whole time to the performance of their legitimate duties, and to the welfare and interest of the Indians under their charge, without being compelled, as it is now the case with many of them, to resort either to speculation or some other resource, in order to make both ends meet and allow them to make a living, and a poor one at that. They should also be promptly furnished by the government with everything necessary to allow them to perform their duties properly, and with as few drawbacks as possible, and without giving the Indians any just cause to complain. They should always have ample means and everything necessary on hand, and they should be vested with all due power for the proper discharge of their duties.

All this properly attended to on the part of the government, would make the agents feel independent and would induce them to exert themselves and, indeed, it would encourage them in every respect. All of which could not but have great effect toward the better care and management of the Indians and of Indian Affairs in general.

We are neither philosopher nor law maker; neither are we attorney for any Indian agents, but we honestly believe that our suggestions, if adopted and properly acted upon, cannot but have a good effect towards mitigating our Indian troubles in a great measure and be the means of greatly improving our Indian Affairs and the condition of the Indians throughout the country, and we do not hesitate in saying that this will prove a far better remedy than to place the Indians entirely in the hands of the military. Indeed, in our opinion, the Indian Bureau should be constituted into an independent department, if possible, and thus place it beyond the reach of rivalry and controversy and make it complete and efficient. For the accomplishment of this, a complete code of laws or regulations, especially adapted for this branch of the service, should be compiled, and the military, so far as necessary, should be employed to enforce the same. This subject is no new discovery with us. We have been advocating the same since 1865; see report "On the condition of the Indian tribes" for 1867, page 439.

This would concentrate Indian matters in one department, instead of being, as they now are, divided between the War Department and that of the Interior, which cannot but operate badly, and we may say even detrimentally, both to the interest of the public and the Indians generally. This is more apt to the case when these departments act independently of each other, if not against each other, which, through various causes, is very frequently the case.

Now that we are about to bring these matters to a close, let us suppose that the whole army of the United States is turned out against the Indians; and that you charter them to your own satisfaction, and complete y subdue them. What are you going to do with them afterwards? You will still have to provide for and take care of them we can see no other alternative. All of which facts, we believe ought to strengthen the force of our suggestions and remarks.

We believe that we have fully and clearly demonstrated our proposition, which is here submitted for the careful and discriminating consideration of all concerned, and of those, who may take an interest in these matters, with the hope that our humble and well intended efforts will not prove in vain, and that something will yet be done for the improvement of the present unsatisfactory condition of our Indian affairs.

And in conclusion, we would most cordially and respectfully say to every member of Congress for the honor and credit of the nation at large, and for the sake of all that is good—Do, go to work, in earnest, and take hold of this costly, troublesome, and bloody Indian question, and endeavor by every possible means to bring about a reform. Recollect, that every day wasted in regard to this matter of so vital importance is equal to one month. Think of this fact, and do not allow another one of your session to pass by without your doing something.

And please bear in mind, that the whole of the western frontier is at this very moment "boiling over" in regard to our Indian troubles. The whole matter is in your hands, you alone have the power, and you are entirely responsible. All our hopes are concentrated in you and we shall all wait with anxiety for the result of your wisdom.

Very respectfully,
Your Obedt. Servt.
JOHN WARD.

P.S.—It must be borne in mind, that the foregoing was written in December of 1868; it has never been published before.

Support your home institutions. Subscribe for, and advertise in, the GAZETTE and send an extra copy to your friends.

CLIPPINGS.

A Cincinnati editor asks, "Are we fire-proof?" We hope he is.

A shoe-dealer in Broadway advertises "Woman's Rights—and Lefts."

A Wisconsin paper advertises for sale a cow that gives milk five years old.

The most successful newsboy in Memphis is three years and six months old.

Missouri German undertook to last forty days. He was confined on the twenty seventh.

We are told that Miss Kellogg is going to Havana. But who is going to have Clara Louise?

It is said that nineteen newspapers are to share in the profits of the Georgia State printing.

A disease called the black cholera has broken out with terrible results, in Crawford county, Illinois.

A stone-cutter in Detroit keeps ready-made gravestones with the name—Smith cut thereon

When Jonah's fellow passengers pitched him overboard they evidently regarded him as neither prophet nor loss.

Ridiculous enough. A 200-pound poet as writing verses about what she would do if she were a sun-beam.

An ingenious jailor down East gives his prisoners three pounds of Epsom salts per week to prevent their breaking out.

The only man who ever had any reputation for honesty in a Utah town is now in jail for stealing a drove of cattle.

Columbus, Ga., wouldn't subscribe a red cent for a new church, but old John Robinson's circus took \$2,000 out of the town.

According to a St. Louis they have a Pacific Railroad petition there with a large number of signatures over forty feet long.

A somewhat illiterate gentleman up town has tamed his dog "Michael Angelo," on the supposition that M. A. was one of the old mastiffs.

Under the heading of "Happy Thoughts," the Petersburg (Va.) Appeal says that more sickness prevails in that city than for many years past.

The New London items of the Norwich (Bonn.) Advertiser are gathered under the affecting head of "Pebbles Along the Shore of Time."

Mr William M. Stone, of New York, writes to the Providence Journal in defence of the substantial reality of Mother Goose. He declares that she is no myth but a mortal verity that flourished in Boston (where else!) in the last century. Her daughter, Elizabeth Goose, was married by Cotton Mather to Mr. Fleet, editor of the Boston Weekly Rehearsal, and when the good woman, who was herself the mother of nineteen children saw her, numerous grand children grow up about her, she broke out into such a flood of rhymes and songs to please the little ones withal, that her son-in-law collected and printed them with the title, "Songs for the Nursery; or, Mother Goose's Melodies for Children. Printed by T. Fleet, at his Printing house, Pudding Lane, Boston." Price ten coppers. We are glad that a real person has been found whose memory may receive the blessings of all well regulated children for the delight that she has given them.

Every person on the staff of the London Times has held his place nine years, while some have been connected with the paper twenty-two years.